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ABSTRACT

Because stability in career choice for agricultural occupations is desirable, vocational guidance and orientations which make children and adolescents theoretically and practically familiar with agricultural production must be increased and improved. Data from East Germany indicate that the influence of parents and friends is of major importance for over 50% of young people in choosing a career, with parents' influence (about 34%) the decisive variable. Career choices of over 40% of young people are influenced by social institutions such as agricultural enterprises, centres of vocational guidance, and other state institutions. Children of co-operative farmers are more inclined to choose a career and see social prospects in agriculture than children with a different background. It is important to concentrate advertising in favour of agricultural occupations on rural children and youth. Persuasion, particularly for crop farming jobs, must start earlier and be more intensive. It is necessary to lead adolescents earlier to their careers and to give them relevant and comprehensive information. The majority of young people in agriculture have a positive attitude toward the working conditions, and almost 85% of them are satisfied with their occupation. There is also great satisfaction about management work and possible further training and career development. (CM)

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Choice of Profession, Vocational Training, Occupation and Work

The process of choosing one's career (Berufsfindungsprozeß) - from the forming of ideas about one's desired career (Berufswunsch) up until the final choice of one's occupation (Berufsentscheidung) -, if undertaken in time and well motivated, has great significance for a good attitude to one's career (Berufseinstellung) and a stable attitude to one's work as well as for continuing the career once chosen. Since fluctuation from agricultural occupations must be avoided, the point is to draw special attention to this process and make the key factors that influence the motivation towards one's occupation more convincing. In this context it is important to know which are the factors essentially affecting rural youth in their final choice of a career, which is the amount of their influence, and how long is the period preceding their vocational training when the choice is made. Here, the following picture revealed itself.

Table 1. Rank Order of Decisive Factors Influencing the Choice of Profession (in per cent)

Rank	Influencing Factor	Youth
1	parents	34
2	friends/acquaintances	17
3	agricultural enterprises	16
4	other institutions	14
5	centres of vocational guidance	12
6	teachers	5
7	mass communication means	2

Our investigations revealed that the influence of parents, friends, and acquaintances as regards choosing one's profession

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(Berufswahl) is of major importance for over 50 per cent of young people with their parents' influence (about 34 per cent) being the decisive variable. It is followed for yet over 40 per cent by social institutions, such as agricultural enterprises, centres of vocational guidance, and other state institutions. This suggests that - besides partners upon who one relies - the social institutions on which the centres of vocational guidance could exert more influence are the most convincing factors for young people when their desired career is outlined in their heads, when it is being "fixed" in the adolescent, and results in activities to make a final choice for one or the other agricultural occupation. Thus, these two factor groups play a special role in the personal communication during the process of choosing one's career in the large field of professions and occupations. Therefore, information means must equally be developed to ever more show their effects on balancing social and individual interests - a process rich of problems and contradictions. The stimulating effects of school and mass media have - besides influencing youth - to be directed at these factor groups.

Sociostructural analyses point to the stabilizing power of the social background which counteracts against vocational fluctuation (Fluktuation in der Berufsausübung). Children of co-operative farmers are more inclined to choose a career and see their social prospects in agriculture than children with a different background. This indicates how stable and constant the relatively small class of co-operative farmers in the GDR has become in the social field. It already shows positive effects on the reproduction of agricultural occupations and professions, and constitutes an important sociostructural factor that we must take into account and make use of in relation to reducing

fluctuation. Although urban children can more and more be gained to choose an agricultural occupation, rural children have yet more stable relations with country life and the agricultural occupations. Therefore it is important to concentrate advertising in favour of these occupations at children and young people living in the country, whose parents are due to their occupation and other social factors linked up to the socialist way of living in our villages. The moment when the career is chosen in adolescence also indicates how strong and stable one's desire for the occupation chosen (Fertigkeit des Berufswunsches) is and contains information about the professional ties (Berufsverbundenheit) to be expected.

Table 2. Time When Crop Farming and Stock Breeding Apprentices (Lehrlinge der Pflanzen- und Tierproduktion) Choose Their Career (in per cent)

Field of Production	2 Years or More Before Starting Apprenticeship	About 1 Year Before Starting Apprenticeship	6 to 3 Months Before Starting Apprenticeship	Only Immediately Before Starting Apprenticeship
crop farming	25 (m 29, f 10)	47	24	4
stock breeding	50 (m 63, f 42)	42	7	1

(m = male, f = female)

Starting from the fact that the decision made in early childhood or adolescence which apprenticeship to choose is a well motivated one in most cases, because one has collected as many and as multiple information, has well motivated oneself by using all sources available, and has thus "fallen in love" with an occupation, i. e., because one has in fact looked for

it "on one's very own", it becomes clear that persuasion (Überzeugungsarbeit), in particular for crop farming jobs, must start earlier and be more intensive, i. e. must be improved. As can be recognized, 50 per cent of young people decide to take up a stock breeding occupation, but only 25 per cent choose a crop farming job two years or more before starting their apprenticeship, that is to say, generally in the 8th form; for girls the figure was even not more than 10 per cent. Since in crop farming occupations special efforts are still necessary to fulfil the planned apprentice quota and fluctuation tendencies occur more often than in other agricultural occupations, the stabilization of young people's attitudes to their occupation and career is an important subjective condition for ensuring this production branch to be primarily developed. Vocational guidance and orientation, which make children/adolescents theoretically and practically familiar with the particularities of agricultural production, may contribute to it. The attitudes to one's occupation are to be more stable. Therefore it is necessary to lead the adolescents earlier to their career, to give them relevant and comprehensive information, to let them check and weigh in time with the aim of being enabled to understand their preconceptions (Berufsbild) better and more complete.

The working conditions in agriculture are ever more characterized by the transition to industrialized production methods. Hard physical work, of course, is more and more reduced, but still it exists and is only gradually reducable in a longer lasting rationalization process, especially in the traditional stock breeding enterprises. Our young people, who are equipped with an ever better general and vocational education, have high

job expectations. It should be an interesting and varied job, they want to introduce new ideas and be creative, they would like to be faced with great demands in their specific field and count on further professional training. Over 60 per cent of them are prepared both for intellectual-creative and practical-physical activities, and only over 20 per cent orientated exclusively towards practical-physical activities. These are both favorable and ideal conditions in order to promote amongst young people creativities to accelerate scientific and technical progress in agriculture, to relate the development of youth work teams and the Young Innovator's Exhibition movement (MMM-Bewegung) through a close co-operation of heads and boards with the leading committees of the Free German Youth - FDJ - with respective responsible concrete tasks in production.

Altogether, the large majority of young people in agriculture has a very positive attitude to the working conditions. Almost 85 per cent of them are satisfied with their occupation on the whole. Here, the good social atmosphere prevailing in working team and enterprise represents a decisive factor. This one is very important to be maintained in the relatively small production teams. Further, there is great satisfaction as regards management work, possible further training and further development in one's career, and the measures supporting one's further professional training. Problems related to work organization, technical equipment and social welfare services (soziale Betreuung) have to be more highlighted in future to stabilize the attitudes to one's career and work. The same holds true for apprentices, thus the way of living in the apprentices' hostels - in particular for leisure time activities - being significant for their ties to their occupation, significant indeed for the

prospects in their career and their social prospects in the country.

It could be proved that there are relations between the amount of satisfaction with one's career and work and the desire of changing one's career and work place (fluctuation tendency). It is therefore important that the leading bodies draw in their managerial work much attention to the material and social factors stimulating a good attitude to one's career and work from the time when a career is being chosen, throughout one's vocational training up until the working in one's job. This requires a good analytical work from the boards and management.